



<b>Policy Name</b>	Child Safe Policy
<b>Approval body</b>	Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. Committee of Management (CoM)
<b>Endorsement Date</b>	This policy was adopted by resolution of the CoM on <b>Wednesday 22 March 2023.</b>
<b>Current version</b>	1.0 - <i>Policy documents occasionally change. It is recommended that you consult the electronic copy to ensure that you have the current version.</i>
<b>Compulsory Review Cycle</b>	2 years
<b>Review Date</b>	2025
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), Worker Screening Act 2020, Reportable Conduct Scheme, Children Youth and Families Act 2005, Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021, Disability Act 2006.</i>
<b>Relevant Organisation Documents</b>	<i>Reportable Conduct Policy; Code of Conduct; Privacy Policy; Social Media Policy.</i>

## **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards, which are compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children and young people (or are used by children and young people), to help protect them from harm.

The purpose of this Child Safe Policy is to ensure that all employees, consultants, contractors, or volunteers engaged by Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. (STiH) are aware of our organisations commitment and obligation to creating a child safe organisation.

The policy aims to communicate our commitment to child safety, in a way that can be understood by all, including children and young people, and it explains key features of our approach to meeting the standards.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to the following people and organisations:

- All staff engaged by the STiH.
- All volunteers engaged by STiH, this includes members of the Committee of Management, and volunteer mentors.
- All STiH formal School Partners.
- Consultants and contractors engaged by STiH.

This policy applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur. For example, the Child Safe Policy will apply when staff and volunteers come into contact with children and young people:

- In the STiH office.
- At schools during mentoring sessions, meetings or interviews.
- At events, incursions or excursions hosted by STiH or school partners.
- Through services provided by school partners.
- Through incidental contact (e.g. via at local cafes, parks, gardens, shops etc).

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of their obligations under the **Reportable Conduct Policy**, whereby allegations of staff and volunteer misconduct involving children and young people can be made against a member even if the conduct occurred outside of their work or mentoring sessions.



---

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

STiH is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

We seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have zero tolerance for racism, child abuse and inequality. Children and young people's rights, relationships, identity, and culture must be recognised and respected, their voices heard, and their concerns acted upon.

We aim to foster a culturally safe, child safe and child friendly environment for all children and young people we have contact with, deliver services to, or are impacted by our work.

STiH requires all staff and volunteers to uphold these commitments. STiH has specific policies, procedures, and training in place to achieve these commitments.

## OUR APPROACH TO CHILD SAFETY

This section provides an overview of the measures in place to support child safety across our organisation.

### Building a child safe culture

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to support our Organisation's commitment and obligation to creating a child safe environment.

### Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers must always ensure that they display appropriate standards of behaviour towards children and young people, ensuring their rights are respected, they feel safe and protected and their concerns are taken seriously.

The STiH *Child Safe Code of Conduct* outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people. It aims to protect children and young people and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

### Recruitment

The recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers aims to support our organisations commitment to promoting an organisational culture of child safety. STiH has robust recruitment and selection processes. Our team carries out interviews, reference checks, and requires a valid and clear Working with Children Check and Police Records Checks, as well as the satisfactory completion of Child Safe Training by all applicants, to ensure that only the right people are recruited.

For positions that involve contact with children and young people, recruitment is based on selection criteria which clearly demonstrate commitment to child safety to assist STiH in ensuring that the most appropriate staff and volunteers are employed. Selection reflects an understanding of, and commitment to, a child safe environment.

It is a requirement for all prospective / new staff members to undertake a National Criminal History Record Check prior to commencement of employment.



All people engaged in child-related work as defined in the Working with Children Act 2005, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children (WWC) Check and to provide evidence that the WWC Check always remains valid whilst employed or engaged by STiH.

### **Training and supervision**

STiH is committed to ensuring that staff have access to appropriate professional learning and training opportunities to develop and maintain an understanding of child safety and prevention of harm. To support staff and volunteers, relevant training programs, including the STiH volunteer mentor onboarding program, includes appropriate content which outlines our organisations expectations and commitment to child safety. Training will also include how to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Child Safe Training will be delivered at least every two years and will include guidance on:

- National and State child safety standards.
- STiH Child Safe policies, procedures, codes, and practices.
- Protecting children – mandatory reporting.
- Recognising indicators of child harm.
- Responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting others who disclose harm.
- How to build culturally safe environments for children and students.
- Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations.
- How to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

STiH works to ensure all children and young people, families, staff and volunteers understand their obligations and know who to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour. STiH takes all allegations of child abuse and reportable conduct seriously. It is committed to ensuring that such allegations are addressed in accordance with legal processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Child safe issues should be reported to the STiH Child Safety Officers. If a staff member or volunteer has a reasonable belief that reportable conduct may have occurred, then they must report the incident immediately to the STiH Child Safety Officer/s. If the incident is a criminal offence, the incident must also be reported to the police on 000.

The following reportable conduct must be reported:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded.
- Sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.





#### Making complaints:

Any child, parent, child's trusted adult representative, independent support person, staff member, volunteer or adult supervisor may make a complaint about abuse or inappropriate behaviour undertaken by any person engaged by STiH.

Abuse can involve neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and bullying.

Inappropriate behaviour (that can be sexual in nature) includes but is not limited to:

- Showing favours to one child over others (eg. giving a child a lift home).
- Taking unauthorised photos, storing and sharing photos of a child in the Program.
- Sharing sexual photos or videos or other photos of the child.
- Creating situations to be alone unsupervised with a child.
- Repeatedly visiting a child and/or their family at their home.
- Providing excessive gifts or favours to a child or their family.
- Using sexual language or gestures.
- Making written or verbal sexual advances.
- Sharing details with a child of one's own sexual experiences.
- Taking a child to one's house to be alone with the child.
- Arranging to meet a child alone away from the school.
- Sharing phone numbers with a child.
- Engaging with a child via social media.
- Asking children to keep a relationship secret.
- Not respecting the privacy of children when they are using the bathroom or changing.

Note: While it is understood that there are some pre-existing family relationships within the Program, which may mean that some volunteers and staff have connections with a child outside the program, it remains the child safety policy of the organisation not to engage in inappropriate behaviour in the context of this Program.

Below are examples of conduct, which if proven, would constitute a criminal offence:

- Obscene exposure (for example, an adult masturbating in front of a child or exposing their genitals).
- Having, attempting to have, or facilitating any kind of sexual contact with a child.
- Possessing, creating or exposing children to pornography.
- Giving goods, money, attention or affection in exchange for sexual activities or images.
- Voyeurism.
- Sexting.
- Grooming offences (as defined by law in most jurisdictions).

Complaints should ideally be made in writing, but we understand that this is not always possible. If a complaint is made verbally, the person to whom the complaint is made should record it in writing as soon as possible. Complainants should be encouraged to report their allegation to the Police where the conduct is criminal.



---

The STiH Child Safety Officers can be contacted by email or phone as follows:

- President - Rob Vecchiet [president@standingtallhamilton.com.au](mailto:president@standingtallhamilton.com.au) or by phone 0427 712 480.
- Program Manager - Dee Barrera [dee@standingtallhamilton.com.au](mailto:dee@standingtallhamilton.com.au) or by phone 0432 984 400.
- Program Coordinator - Mel Fitzpatrick [mel@standingtallhamilton.com.au](mailto:mel@standingtallhamilton.com.au) or by phone 0448 712 351.

Please refer to the STiH Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy for further information on the process for reporting and responding to allegations of reportable conduct.

### **Privacy**

For STiH to perform its functions under the Child Safe Standards, it may be required to collect personal information about an employee, consultant/contractor or volunteer and disclose that information to a third party. Personal information which is collected and/or disclosed about an individual will be managed in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

### **Responding to complaints**

If a complaint is made by a child (and is not subject to Police processes), the most important thing is to listen and tell the child that they are not to blame. Do not press for information or push the child to reveal the details of the abuse. Do not ask leading questions, rather listen carefully and if possible, take notes. Reassure the child that they are right to tell and that what they say is taken very seriously, but do not promise them that no one else will be informed about the complaint.

Complaints may be made by someone who witnesses abuse towards a child or is informed about abuse that has allegedly occurred. These complaints should be taken just as seriously as if the complaint was coming from the child directly.

STiH responds promptly and consistently to all complaints. Members of STiH are mindful of diversity and the cultural norms and expectations that are within the group of people coming into contact with STiH. It is important to be educated about the specific diversity needs within STiH. Additional safeguards may be required to meet the needs of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, or children who live in out-of-home care.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Child means a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse means a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded, sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or significant neglect of a child.

Child Safe Standards as made under section 17(1) of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.





---

## APPROVAL

This Child Safe Policy is issued following formal endorsement by the Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. Committee of Management on **Wednesday 22 March 2023**, and in accordance with section 16K (1) of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

The contents of this document represent the current policy of STiH and reflect its current practices and experience.

This policy is subject to regular review and will be altered (and the alterations communicated to users) as, and when, appropriate in order to ensure that it remains current.

## CONTACT

Please contact the President, Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. in relation to the matters arising under this policy:

Rob Vecchiet  
President, Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.  
Phone: 0427 712 480  
Email: [president@standingtallhamilton.com.au](mailto:president@standingtallhamilton.com.au)

